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FM REO KIRKUK
TO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 0462
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0498
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEHKUK/REO KIRKUK 0524

S E C R E T KIRKUK 000020

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BAGHDAD FOR POL, POLMIL, RSO, NCT, PAO
STATE FOR NEA/I, DRL, DS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/31/2016
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SUBJECT: (U) KIRKUK CHURCHES BOMBED

REF: 2-327 (101 AIRBORNE DIVISION) INTEL REPORT OF 30 JANUARY 2006 (NOTAL)

CLASSIFIED BY: Richard K. Bell, Regional Coordinator, Exec,
Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (d)

(C) 2 CAR BOMBS 10 MINUTES APART TARGET CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

11. (S) According to Coalition military and local Iraqi security service information, on January 29 two vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) detonated near two churches in northern Kirkuk city. The first VBIED detonated at 1435 hours near the Mar-Afram church in the Quriyah neighborhood of Kirkuk and wounded six. The second was remotely detonated 10 minutes later near the Maryam Athera Church in the Shatrlo neighborhood of Kirkuk, killing one and mortally wounding two others.

(U) COMMENT

12. (C) Although this is the first time we know of that Christian churches have been bombed in Kirkuk, the Christian community here has been targeted before. Local churches received threat letters just before Christmas 2003 and kidnappers have heavily targeted Christians, who are seen as wealthy and lacking protection.

BELL